THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOLA CANTORUM
CHARLES COLE

SACRED TREASURES OF *Venice*

BASSANO
CROCE · FINETTI
GIOVANNI GABRIELI
ANDREA GABRIELI
MERULO
MONTEVERDI

hyperion

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SACRED TREASURES OF VENICE

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Venice

THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOLA CANTORUM
CHARLES COLE director

SACRED TREASURES OF VENICE continues our anthology of sacred music which is drawn from the liturgical repertoire that we sing at the London Oratory. With one exception, all of the composers represented here were closely associated with St Mark's, the Doge's Ducal Chapel which was very much the hub of the spiritual and political power concentrated in Venice, and consequently attracted the greatest musicians. These composers all share something else in common, in that they lived and worked through the culmination and final bloom of the polyphonic age, a unique period of musical transition of which they could not have been unaware, right at the end of the Renaissance and at the beginnings of what would become the Baroque era. The new style would see an increasing mingling of choirs and instruments, which is perhaps what many people have come to expect when they hear Venetian music; however, our recording focuses on the *a cappella* repertoire.

The Schola is at its heart and purpose a liturgical choir, and we present this recording as an insight into the liturgical life of the London Oratory, where this music can be heard in its proper context. The boys come from The London Oratory School, with the Newman Choral Scholars drawn from recent alumni, and on this recording the average age of all the singers, across the four voice parts, is fourteen. We are, once again, delighted to share this music with a wider audience.

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The London Oratory Schola Cantorum singing at St Mark's, Venice, in July 2023

SACRED TREASURES OF VENICE

ALTHOUGH Monteverdi would ultimately dominate the early Venetian Baroque, a remarkable period immediately preceded his arrival at San Marco—the period of the 'Three Giovannis'. It is almost impossible to imagine such great talents as Giovanni Gabrieli, Giovanni Bassano and Giovanni Croce all working alongside each other in the same place at the same time, but such a unique situation could only have existed at St Mark's: Gabrieli as First Organist, Bassano as *maestro* of instrumental music, and Croce as the overall *maestro di cappella*, all three of them writing music of incredible quality.

Giovanni, the younger of the two Gabrielis, studied with Lassus in Munich during the 1570s before returning to Venice, where he was appointed Second Organist at St Mark's in 1584, rising to First Organist the following year on the death of the incumbent, his uncle Andrea. The First and Second Organists would alternate week by week, covering all duties in the Basilica alone; however, both were required for major feasts, when the *primo* would accompany the choir, the *secondo* playing with the instruments and accompanying soloists. Giovanni Gabrieli's famous eight-part setting of **Jubilate Deo** draws together a number of verses from the psalms, including the text 'Deus Israel coniugat vos', the word 'coniugat' undoubtedly recalling in the minds of the Venetians the annual conjoining of the Doge and the lagoon in the ceremonial marriage of the Serenissima and the sea. A relatively late work, not published until a year after his death, the absolute mastery of the construction and its polished craftsmanship show Gabrieli at the height of his powers. Interestingly though, it is harmonically far more conservative than the next three motets, which were published as part of Gabrieli's earlier 1597 collection *Symphoniae sacrae I*. The six-part **Beata es virgo Maria** was intended for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, and the double-choir **Ego sum qui sum** is a setting of a Matins text for Easter Sunday. In these, Gabrieli is more willing to exert a gentle pressure on the tonality. The wondrous sonorities which arise are especially spectacular in the seven-part **O quam suavis** for Corpus Christi which includes a poignant quotation of the Gregorian second-mode *Magnificat* tone at 'dimittens inanes'. The powerful downward melodic gestures in the trebles at 'demonstrares' meet with opposing upward force in the lower voices, bracing the harmonic structure, whilst the final cadence, arguably unsurpassed in this anthology, achieves a fragile and delicate beauty like the finest Murano vase.

The next Giovanni, Bassano, was renowned as a cornettist and most famous for an important treatise on instrumental ornamentation. He was named by Praetorius as being the inventor of the bassanello, a Renaissance precursor of the bassoon, although the more probable inventor was in fact Bassano's father, Santo. Setting text drawn from the Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*, **Dic nobis Maria** is a tightly constructed piece which revolves around the number three. There are three sections, the first of which has three iterations of a rondo refrain, introduced at the opening by the upper three parts, then joined by the lower three. Mary Magdalen's three iterations of what she saw are combined into the resulting inner episodes. The second section, 'Surrexit Christus' in triple time, now divides the six voices into two overlapping groups of four. This inner section is repeated before the third section, a highly syncopated Alleluia (barely any lead is unsyncopated) which evokes sparring cornettists in a virtuosic display.

Claudio Merulo arrived from Brescia Cathedral at St Mark's as Second Organist in 1557, beating amongst others the elder Andrea Gabrieli in the competition, the auditions for which warrant scrutiny for what they reveal—candidates were presented with three tests: in the first, a four-part Kyrie

or motet was selected from the Choirbook, the opening bars of which were given to the candidate, who was then expected to extemporize at the organ and to continue the thematic material, maintaining the integrity and independence of the four voice parts as though being sung by four singers. In the second test, a Gregorian theme was provided which the candidate was asked to use as a bass under three improvised parts. The theme was subsequently required to appear in the remaining three parts. Simple accompaniment was to be avoided, and fugal imitation was expected. In the third test, a small choir would sing a deliberately obscure set of verses, possibly fauxbourdons, with the candidate being required to improvise a response at the organ, showing an understanding of the presented mode, in free improvisation which should be both within and outside the mode. This final test was really an invitation for the candidate to show what they could do. One can easily surmise that the focus of these tests was not so much on the keyboard skills of the organist, which were taken almost for granted, but rather on their knowledge and application of complex compositional theory, and it goes some way to explaining the extraordinary level of compositional excellence found amongst the musicians at St Mark's.

Merulo, having acquitted himself well in very serious competition, began a long stint at St Mark's, progressing to First Organist in 1566. However, his departure for a relatively low-profile position at the Duomo in Parma was unusual, as it was almost unheard of for musicians to leave St Mark's, typically dying in post. It is possible Merulo's move had more to do with the publishing house which he ran in Venice, ownership of which passed to the Farnese family of Parma in 1584, the same year he departed. His two six-part motets come from a 1593 publication, with **Adoramus te Domine** using a variant of the more usual text and **Beata viscera** being a Communion for the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The arrival of Monteverdi at St Mark's represented a major change; a Venetian outsider, he had not worked his way up through the ranks as a singer or even *vice-maestro* at St Mark's. A willing exile from a difficult experience in Mantua, he was long overdue a fulfilling and fruitful environment, which he certainly found at St Mark's. One of his earliest innovations concerned the music provided for Low Masses: the Doge was required to attend Mass in the Basilica on certain days when ceremonies would also take him elsewhere, and even at these Low Masses, there was a modest provision of music usually sung by a small unaccompanied choir of around four to six parts. As there was insufficient repertoire for these Masses, repetition of music was frequent and Monteverdi sought to remedy the problem. Unconstrained as he was by a certain Venetian hauteur towards Roman music, Monteverdi persuaded the authorities to purchase volumes of four-, five- and six-part works by Palestrina and Soriano to address the need.

It seems possible that **Adoramus te Christe** and **Cantate Domino**, six-part motets from a 1620 collection published by Monteverdi's pupil Giulio Cesare Bianchi, may also have been written to broaden this area of the repertory. In his treatise on musical theory, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (1558), Gioseffo Zarlino, who was *maestro* at St Mark's during the second half of the sixteenth century, wrote of the importance of the harmonic self-sufficiency of choirs—in other words, that composers should be careful to ensure that each individual choir was not lacking any element of the full harmony, particularly when *cori spezzati* (separated choirs) were employed. However, by the seventeenth century, composers were starting to rely on the harmonic infill provided by the *basso continuo*, which means that it is arguably something of a stretch to sing these two motets *a cappella* as we do here, with a few chords missing a third, but these are sonorities to which we have grown accustomed. Monteverdi's death in 1643 was marked with

the highest honours of the Republic and burial in one of Venice's grandest churches, the Basilica di Santa Maria dei Frari.

The Frari, as it is better known, was where Giacomo Finetti served as *maestro*, and he is the only composer represented on this recording who was not employed at St Mark's. Born in Ancona and later ordained priest, he served as *maestro* at the nearby Jesi Duomo, then held positions in Ancona and Padua before arriving in Venice in 1615 to take his place at the Frari. He died in the great plague of 1630–31 which claimed the lives of a third of the Venetian population. Much of his prolific output embraced the newer style of *continuo* accompaniment, though **O crux ave, spes unica**, the text of which comes from a verse that was added latterly to *Vexilla regis*, is a poignant motet for Good Friday which can be sung *a cappella*, marked by its tender and lingering repetitions.

Andrea Gabrieli was the much beloved uncle and mentor of Giovanni (who said 'I am little less than [his] son'). He studied under Willaert, and amongst his own pupils were his nephew Giovanni and the German composer Hans Leo Hassler. Having finished runner-up to Claudio Merulo at his first audition at St Mark's, Andrea was nevertheless successful when the position became vacant again, on Merulo's promotion to *primo* in 1566. When Merulo departed for Parma in 1584, Andrea moved to *primo*, conveniently vacating *secondo* for his nephew. In fact, Giovanni would spend only a year as *secondo*, taking over as *primo* on the death of his uncle in 1586. Andrea seems to have been somewhat reticent about publishing his music, which Giovanni sought to amend after his uncle's death. In the touching dedication to the 1587 publication of music by Andrea, he wrote that there are 'few indeed composers and organists as excellent as he is'. Andrea Gabrieli nevertheless took time to emerge from the shadow of his nephew, and it is not insignificant that the current

The London Oratory Schola Cantorum singing at the Frari, Venice, in July 2023

musicians of St Mark's hold him in the very highest esteem amongst their sixteenth-century predecessors.

While motets written in ten, twelve, sixteen or more parts were commonplace amidst the opulent musical splendour of high Venetian ceremony, the more modestly scored motets by Andrea Gabrieli recorded here seem

likely to have been intended for the Low Masses. **Laetare Jerusalem**, a setting of the Introit for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, demonstrates a considerable dynamic sensitivity to the text. Over the course of just a few bars there is a jubilant triple-time treatment of 'gaudete cum laetitia', then a more subdued quadruple-time descending melody for 'qui in tristitia', followed by the 'ut exsultetis' leads which leap joyfully upwards. The rising phrase at 'consolationis' is a strong and distinctive melodic gesture around which Gabrieli builds the conclusion of the motet. **Maria Magdalene** draws its text from St Mark, the favoured evangelist of the Venetians. The characterful entries at 'Nolite expavescere' are followed by a monumental passage at 'Jesum', before 'surrexit' re-captures the jubilant mood which continues into the closing Alleluia.

'Il Chiozzotto', the Chioggian, is the sobriquet by which Croce, the third of the 'Giovannis', was known, named after the small fishing port at the southern end of the Venetian lagoon. Zarlino appointed Croce, aged around eight, as a contralto in the choir of St Mark's, having spotted him in the cathedral choir at Chioggia. Croce was ordained priest and served at Santa Maria Formosa in Venice, but he remained in the choir at St Mark's, which was close by. A fascinating document in the hand of Baldassare Donato, the *maestro* at San Marco, gives some insight into the status of the choir circa 1590, naming and providing a comment on each of the singers. Croce's entry gives his name in the local dialect: 'Padre Zuanne Chiozzotto: a most efficient singer, and where he lacks the delicacy of voice, he makes up for it by good singing.'

Croce may have been appointed *vice-maestro* at St Mark's in 1595, and certainly on Donato's death was elected *maestro* there in 1605. Just two years later, Bartolomeo Moresini was appointed *vice-maestro* to aid him as his health was weak, and he died in 1609. Croce grew a significant international reputation as a writer of madrigals, influencing among others the English composer Thomas Morley. When John Dowland visited Venice in 1595 it was Croce, rather than Gabrieli, whom he came to see.

Despite embracing the world of secular music, Croce's motets are much more conservative than those of Giovanni Gabrieli and closer to the world of Palestrina. There is a sense of practicality too, as the provision of four-part motets such as **Cantate Domino** and the intensely devotional **O sacrum convivium** perhaps points to his association with a smaller church in Venice and an awareness of the needs of liturgy on a more modest scale. Of particular interest is **In spiritu humilitatis**, a rare musical setting of the Offertory prayer spoken privately by the priest. Croce, priest and composer, gives a special insight into this very personal prayer, with the breath-taking suspensions at 'Domine Deus' achieving a truly transcendental beauty in a league of its own. Perhaps one sees more of the secular Croce in **Buccinate in neomenia**, which feels much more madrigalian and spontaneous, yet always maintains a dignified elegance as it surges onward towards its conclusion, sparkling with wave after wave of vibrant energy.

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1 **Jubilate Deo omnis terra** GIOVANNI GABRIELI (*c*1554/7–1612)

Jubilate Deo omnis terra,	*Let every land praise God,*
quia sic benedicetur homo qui timet Dominum.	*as the man who fears the Lord is blessed.*
Jubilate Deo omnis terra.	*Let every land praise God.*
Deus Israel coniugat vos	*May the God of Israel bind you together*
et ipse sit vobiscum,	*and himself be with you,*
mittat vobis auxilium de sancto	*may he send you help from his holiness*
et de Sion tueatur vos.	*and watch over you from Zion.*
Jubilate Deo omnis terra.	*Let every land praise God.*
Benedicat vobis Dominus ex Sion,	*The Lord blessed you out of Zion,*
qui fecit caelum et terram.	*he who made heaven and earth.*
Jubilate Deo omnis terra.	*Let every land praise God.*
Servite Domino in laetitia!	*Serve the Lord with joy!*

based on PSALM 99 (100)

2 **Beata es virgo Maria** GIOVANNI GABRIELI (*c*1554/7–1612)

Beata es virgo Maria, Dei genitrix,	*Blessed are you, Virgin Mary, Mother of God,*
quae credidisti omnia:	*who trusted all things:*
perfecta sunt in te quae dicta sunt tibi:	*accomplished in you are the things told to you:*
Ecce, exaltata es super choros angelorum.	*behold, you are exalted above the choirs of angels.*
Intercede pro nobis ad Dominum Deum tuum.	*Intercede for us with the Lord your God.*

for THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

3 **Ego sum qui sum** GIOVANNI GABRIELI (*c*1554/7–1612)

Ego sum qui sum,	*I am who I am,*
et consilium meum non est cum impiis,	*and my counsel is not with the wicked,*
sed in lege Domini voluntas mea est. Alleluia.	*but in the law of God is my choice. Alleluia.*
Postulavi Patrem meum,	*I have asked my Father:*
dedit mihi gentes in haereditatem. Alleluia.	*he gave to me the nations as an inheritance. Alleluia.*
Ego dormivi, et somnum cepi: et resurrexi,	*I have slept, and I took rest: and I have risen,*
quoniam Dominus suscepit me. Alleluia.	*for the Lord has received me. Alleluia.*

ANTIPHONS AT MATINS ON EASTER SUNDAY

4 **O quam suavis a 7** GIOVANNI GABRIELI (*c*1554/7–1612)

O quam suavis est Domine spiritus tuus,	*How gracious, Lord, is your spirit,*
qui ut dulcedinem tuam	*who, to show your loving kindness*
in filios demonstrares,	*towards your children,*
pane suavissimo de caelo praestito,	*provided the sweetest bread from heaven,*
esurientes reples bonis,	*filling the hungry with good things,*
fastidiosos divites	*and sending the discontented rich*
dimittens inanes.	*away empty.*

ST THOMAS AQUINAS (1225–1274)

5 **Dic nobis Maria** GIOVANNI BASSANO (1560/1–1617)

Dic nobis Maria,	*Tell us, Mary,*
Quid vidisti in via?	*what did you see on the way?*
Sepulchrum Christi viventis,	*The tomb of Christ the living,*
Et gloriam vidi resurgentis.	*and I saw the glory of the risen one.*
Dic nobis Maria,	*Tell us, Mary,*
Quid vidisti in via?	*what did you see on the way?*
Angelicos testes,	*The angel witnesses,*
Sudarium et vestes.	*the sheet and clothes.*
Dic nobis Maria,	*Tell us, Mary,*
Quid vidisti in via?	*what did you see on the way?*
Surrexit Christus spes mea:	*Christ, my hope, has risen:*
Praecedet vos in Galilaeam.	*he will go before you into Galilee.*
Alleluia.	*Alleluia.*

from the Sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*

6 **Adoramus te Domine** CLAUDIO MERULO (1533–1604)

Adoramus te Domine Jesu Christe,	*We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ,*
quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.	*for by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

from THE LITURGY FOR GOOD FRIDAY

7 **Beata viscera** CLAUDIO MERULO (1533–1604)

Beata viscera Mariae virginis	*Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary,*
quae portaverunt aeterni Patris Filium.	*which bore the Son of the eternal Father.*

COMMUNION FOR THE COMMON OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

8 **Adoramus te Christe** CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567–1643)

Adoramus te Christe, et benedicimus tibi,	*We adore you, Christ, and we bless you,*
quia per sanguinem tuum pretiosum	*for by your precious blood*
redemisti mundum; miserere nobis.	*you have redeemed the world; have mercy on us.*

from THE HOURS OF THE CROSS

9 **Cantate Domino a 6** CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567–1643)

Cantate Domino canticum novum,	*Sing to the Lord a new song,*
cantate et benedicite nomini eius,	*sing and bless his name,*
quia mirabilia fecit.	*for he has done wonderful things.*
Cantate et exsultate et psallite.	*Sing and rejoice and play.*
Psallite in cithara et voce psalmi,	*Play on the lyre and with the voice of psalmody,*
quia mirabilia fecit.	*for he has done wonderful things.*

after PSALM 97 (98)

10 **O crux ave, spes unica** GIACOMO FINETTI (*fl*1605–1631)

O crux ave, spes unica,	*O Cross, hail, our only hope;*
Hoc Passionis tempore	*in this Passiontide*
Auge piis iustitiam,	*increase justice to the pious,*
Reisque dona veniam.	*and to sinners grant forgiveness.*

verse 9 of *Vexilla regis*
for PASSION SUNDAY IN HOLY WEEK & THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS

11 **Laetare Jerusalem** ANDREA GABRIELI (*c*1510–1586)

Laetare Jerusalem: et conventum facite omnes	*Be glad, Jerusalem: and come together all you*
qui diligitis eam: gaudete cum laetitia,	*who love her: rejoice with gladness,*
qui in tristitia fuistis: ut exsultetis, et satiemini	*you who were in sadness: so you might exalt, and be filled*
ab uberibus consolationis vestrae.	*from the fertility of her kindness.*

INTROIT AT MASS ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

12 **Maria Magdalene, Maria Jacobi, et Salome** ANDREA GABRIELI (*c*1510–1586)

Maria Magdalene, Maria Jacobi,
et Salome emerunt aromata,
ut venientes ungerent Jesum.
Et dicebant ad invicem:
Quis revolvet nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti?
Dixit illis angelus: Nolite expavescere,
Jesum quaeritis Nazarenum crucifixum,
surrexit non est hic. Alleluia.

Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James,
and Salome bought aromatic oils,
intending to go and anoint Jesus.
And they said to one another:
Who will roll for us the stone from the door of the tomb?
An angel said to them: Do not be alarmed,
Jesus whom you seek, the crucified Nazarene,
has risen, is not here. Alleluia.

after MARK 16: 1–3 & 6

13 **Cantate Domino** GIOVANNI CROCE (*c*1557–1609)

Cantate Domino canticum novum:
cantate Domino omnis terra.
Cantate Domino, et benedicite nomini eius:
annuntiate de die in diem salutare eius.

Sing to the Lord a new song:
sing to the Lord all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, and bless his name:
show forth from day to day his salvation.

PSALM 95 (96): 1–2

14 **O sacrum convivium a 4** GIOVANNI CROCE (*c*1557–1609)

O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur:
recolitur memoria passionis eius,
mens impletur gratia,
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur. Alleluia.

O sacred feast in which Christ is taken:
recalled is the memory of his passion,
the soul is filled with thanks,
and of future glory a promise to us is given. Alleluia.

ANTIPHON AT SECOND VESPERS ON THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

15 **In spiritu humilitatis** GIOVANNI CROCE (*c*1557–1609)

In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito,
suscipiamur a te Domine:
et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu tuo hodie,
ut placeat tibi Domine Deus.

Humble in spirit and contrite of soul,
may we be accepted by you, Lord:
and thus may our sacrifice be offered in your sight today,
as it is pleasing to you, Lord God.

after DANIEL 3: 39b & 40b

16 **Buccinate in neomenia** GIOVANNI CROCE (*c*1557–1609)

Buccinate in neomenia tuba,
in insigni die solemnitatis vestrae. Alleluia.
In voce exsultationis, in voce tubae corneae,
exsultate Deo adiutori nostro. Alleluia.
Jubilemus Deo in chordis et organo,
in tympano et choro.
Cantate et exsultate et psallite. Alleluia.

Sound trumpets at the new moon,
on the chosen day of your festivities. Alleluia.
With a voice of rejoicing, with the voice of a horn trumpet,
rejoice in God our Saviour. Alleluia.
Shout out to God with strings and organ,
with drum and choir.
Sing and rejoice and play. Alleluia.

after PSALM 80 (81): 2 & 4 and PSALM 97 (98): 4

THE SCHOLA CANTORUM OF THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

Patrons: HE Robert Cardinal Sarah, Dom Geoffroy Kemlin OSB, Abbot of Solesmes, HRH Princess Michael of Kent, Sir James MacMillan CBE

The Schola Cantorum of The London Oratory School sings the Vigil Mass at the London Oratory every Saturday evening in term time and on major feast days for School Mass throughout the year. Founded in 1996, the choir gives Catholic boys aged seven to eighteen the opportunity of a choral education within the state-education system. In 2022 the School introduced the Newman Choral Scholarships, which are awarded to boys who have just finished school, enabling them to continue to sing with the Schola alongside their university studies. In addition to its liturgical role, the Schola has made many recordings and has toured widely abroad, performing throughout the USA and Europe.

In recent years the Schola has sung at the Spanish Cathedrals of Madrid, Granada, Segovia and Toledo, as well as at the Monastery of San Lorenzo el Real in El Escorial. During a recent tour to Venice, the Schola sang at St Mark's Basilica, San Moisè and Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. A tour to the East Coast of the USA included performances in Boston, New York and Washington, DC, while the choir's most recent tour to the USA included appearances at the Cathedral of the Madeleine, Salt Lake City, and a number of the Californian Missions.

The Schola sang at the Canonization of John Henry Newman at St Peter's, Rome, in 2019 as well as at a number of services and concerts in and around the Vatican, including a reception attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, and a private recital for the Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI.

The choir is closely associated with Aid to the Church in Need, singing for services and events to help the charity's work in providing support to persecuted Christians in the Middle East. The trebles also sing for a number of the Royal Ballet's productions at the Royal Opera House, including *The Dream* and *The Nutcracker*. Recent concert performances by the Schola at the London Oratory include Monteverdi's *Vespers* and J S Bach's Mass in B minor, the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, and the *Christmas Oratorio*.

CHARLES COLE

Charles Cole began his musical training as a chorister at Westminster Cathedral. He went on to win scholarships to Ampleforth and Exeter College, Oxford, before returning to Westminster Cathedral as organ scholar. He was appointed Director of the Schola Cantorum at The London Oratory School in 2012 and is also Assistant Director of Music at the London Oratory where he directs the London Oratory Junior Choir.

In 2010 he directed the children's chorus in a 400th-anniversary performance of the Monteverdi *Vespers* with the Monteverdi Choir at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms, and in two further performances at The Sheldonian in Oxford, and Durham Cathedral.

On the occasion of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to London, he conducted London Brass in Sir James MacMillan's *Tu es Petrus*, which was commissioned for Mass at Westminster Cathedral, and played the organ for the Prayer Vigil at Hyde Park, which drew a congregation of 80,000. He has played at many prestigious venues in London, including Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Albert Hall for a Prom with the Oxford Camerata.

He was invited by composer Sir James MacMillan to speak about Gregorian chant at Musica Sacra Scotland's inaugural conference, and in the Holy Land he has led a number of choral workshops for both children's and adult choirs in Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem. He is a board member of the Church Music Association of America and has taken part in recent colloquia in Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Indianapolis, specializing in Gregorian chant and choral direction. He has given organ recitals in St Petersburg, at the Notre-Dame in Paris (as part of the 850th-anniversary-year celebrations), the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City, and St Saviour's Church in Jerusalem.

THE SCHOLA CANTORUM OF THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

treble Matteo Castelli, Christopher Falco, Aidan Gillen, Dominic Glucina, Hugo Graebert, Thomas Griffin, Alexandre Henault, Edward Hinds, Oscar Hobkinson, Nathaniel Jarosiewicz, Leonardo Lawry, Gabriel Leal-Silva, Emilio Miyar-Rogstad, Alexandre Moulle, Leonard Mugharbil, Frederick Roberts, Ricardo Serrano Teixeira, James Tweedie, Jean-Baptiste Waline, Christian Wanat, Giovanni Ziliotti

alto Leo De Flammineis, Tobias Dean, Hugo Farmer (Schola prefect), Rocco Samarasinhe, Nathaniel Verdin

tenor Mathurin Briffaut, Maurice Cole†, Peter DiToro*, James Gardner, Luca Hayes Lorente, Oliver Smith†

bass Darragh Bunting, Mateusz Byrski, Davide Castelli, Charles Dean†, Elias Ferros, Geoffroy Le Calvez, Thomas Richardson†, Charles Romeu-Villalobos, Ben Smith

* Layclerk (alumni) † Newman Choral Scholar (alumni)

voice trainer Anita Morrison

director Charles Cole

www.londonoratoryschola.com

Sacred treasures of Christmas *CDA68358*

works by Clemens, Giovanni Gabrieli, Guerrero, Hassler, Lassus, Mouton, Nanino, Palestrina, Scheidt, Sheppard, Sweelinck, Tallis & Victoria

'Impressively mature and well blended … if the Christmas collection is typical of things to come, this should be an interesting project to keep an eye on' (*Gramophone*)

'The 50-strong Oratory choir is made up entirely of boys, and conductor Charles Cole draws singing of vernal freshness from them, with excellent ensemble and an interpretive awareness that puts many an adult choir in the shadow. This is a warmly recommended recording' (*BBC Music Magazine*)

Sacred treasures of Spain *CDA68359*

works by Esquivel, Guerrero, Alonso Lobo, Morales, Ribera, Robledo, Victoria & Vivanco

'This recording includes several of the most familiar, and finest, motets of the Spanish Renaissance sung, as the director is justifiably keen to point out in his notes, by a choir which has this music in its bones. This repertory is sung extensively by the choir, and its stylistic familiarity is evident right from the start' (*Cathedral Music*)

'The Schola Cantorum are at home in the softer draping of Guerrero's counterpoint, revelling in the gentle sensuality of his *Ave virgo sanctissima* and his lyrical *O sacrum convivium*' (*Gramophone*)

Recorded in St Augustine's Church, Kilburn, London, on 13–15 March 2023
Recording Engineer TOM MUNGALL
Recording Producer ADRIAN PEACOCK
Music Editions CHARLES COLE
Booklet Editor TODD HARRIS
Executive Producers SIMON PERRY, NICK FLOWER
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Front illustration: *Madonna and child with Saint Catherine and Saint Mary Magdalen* (*c*1480/1500) by Giovanni Bellini (*c*1430–1516)
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